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FINE ARTS
READING ROOM

Bulletin

OF THE
DETROIT
INSTITUTE
OF ARTS



SILVER TUREEN (cover)

by THOMAS GERMAIN, French (1673-1748)

The Elizabeth Parke Firestone

Collection of French Silver, 1955

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Fig. 1. BOWL, PERSIAN
10th-11th century

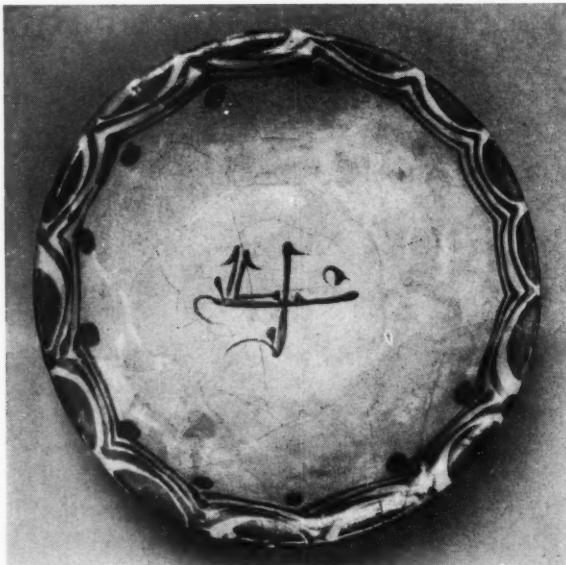


Fig. 2. BOWL, MESOPOTAMIAN
(Samarra), 9th century

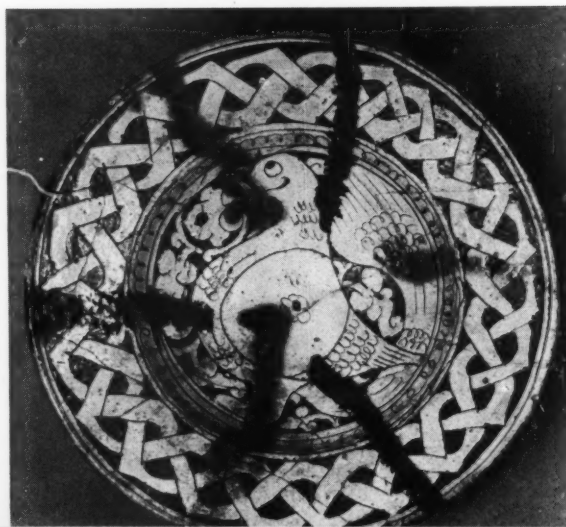


Fig. 3. PLATE, PERSIAN
10th-11th century

The bowls and the plate
reproduced on this page
are the gifts of
the Founders Society,
General Membership Fund.

THE WORKS OF ART illustrated in the following pages have for the most part been acquired in the past twelve months. They have been chosen for reproduction in this "Picture Book" for their artistic importance and rarity, from among the many objects acquired in 1954-55, mostly through gifts from public spirited friends of our museum, to whom go our thanks.

POTTERY FROM PERSIA AND MESOPOTAMIA

From the estate of the late Eustache de Lorey eight examples of ceramics from Persia and Mesopotamia have been acquired; four of these are a gift of the Founders Society, four a gift of M. Maurice Eustache, in memory of his brother. As a group they represent well the different trends in design and craftsmanship, from the ninth to the thirteenth century.

The three most important pieces are illustrated. The earliest (fig. 2) is a shallow bowl of yellow earthenware, enameled in white.¹ The overglaze decoration, painted in cobalt blue, shows the Arabic word for "blessing" and the potter's signature "Salih," within a border of semicircles and dots. The bowl comes from Samarra on the Tigris, a city founded by the Abbasid Caliph Mutasim, but abandoned in 883 A.D., because the Caliph Mutamid preferred the old residence, Bagdad. The ceramics excavated at Samarra can thus be safely dated in the ninth century.

In Persia the early Islamic potters created several new types. One handsome bowl² (fig. 1) shows a long-legged bird amid plants. The design is incised and painted in purple manganese, green and yellow, beneath a colorless glaze. A yellow glaze covers the outside of the bowl.

To the same period, the tenth to eleventh century, belongs another type, a plate of brown earthenware with a white slip³ (fig. 3). The incised decoration shows a pigeon and scrolling plants, within a plaited ribbon border. The green and purple splashes reflect the painter's idea of Chinese pottery of the T'ang period.

All eight bowls have figured in exhibitions of Islamic art in Paris (1925), London (1931), New York (1931) and San Francisco (1937).

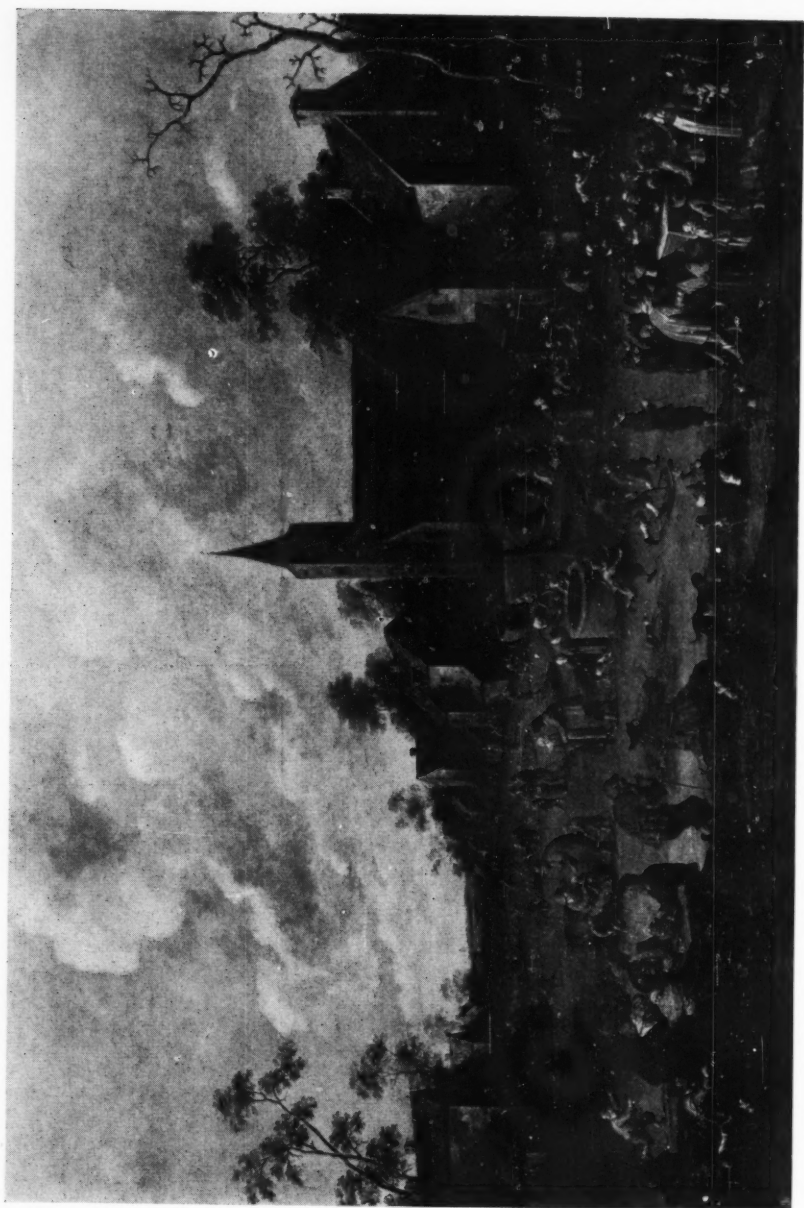
ADÈLE COULIN WEIBEL

¹ Acc. No. 54.498. Diameter 8¼ inches. Exhibited: London, Burlington House, 1931, Catalogue No. 48Q; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1931, Catalogue No. 140; San Francisco, M. H. De Young Memorial Museum, 1937, Catalogue No. 101.

References: G. Wiet, *L'Exposition Persane de 1931*, p. 9, pl. XVI; A. U. Pope, *Survey of Persian Art*, 1939, pp. 1482, 1484, pl. 572D. *Gift of the Founders Society*, 1954.

² Acc. No. 54.499. Diameter 8½ inches. Exhibited: New York, 1931, Catalogue No. 24; San Francisco, 1937, Catalogue No. 113. *Gift of the Founders Society*, 1954.

³ Acc. No. 54.500. Diameter 12¾ inches. Exhibited: Paris, Exposition d'Art Oriental, 1925, Catalogue No. 606; San Francisco, 1937, Catalogue No. 115. *Gift of the Founders Society*, 1954.



A VILLAGE FESTIVAL
by JOOST CORNELISZ
DROOCHSLOOT
Dutch, 1586-1666
Gift of Mrs.
William E. Scripps, 1954

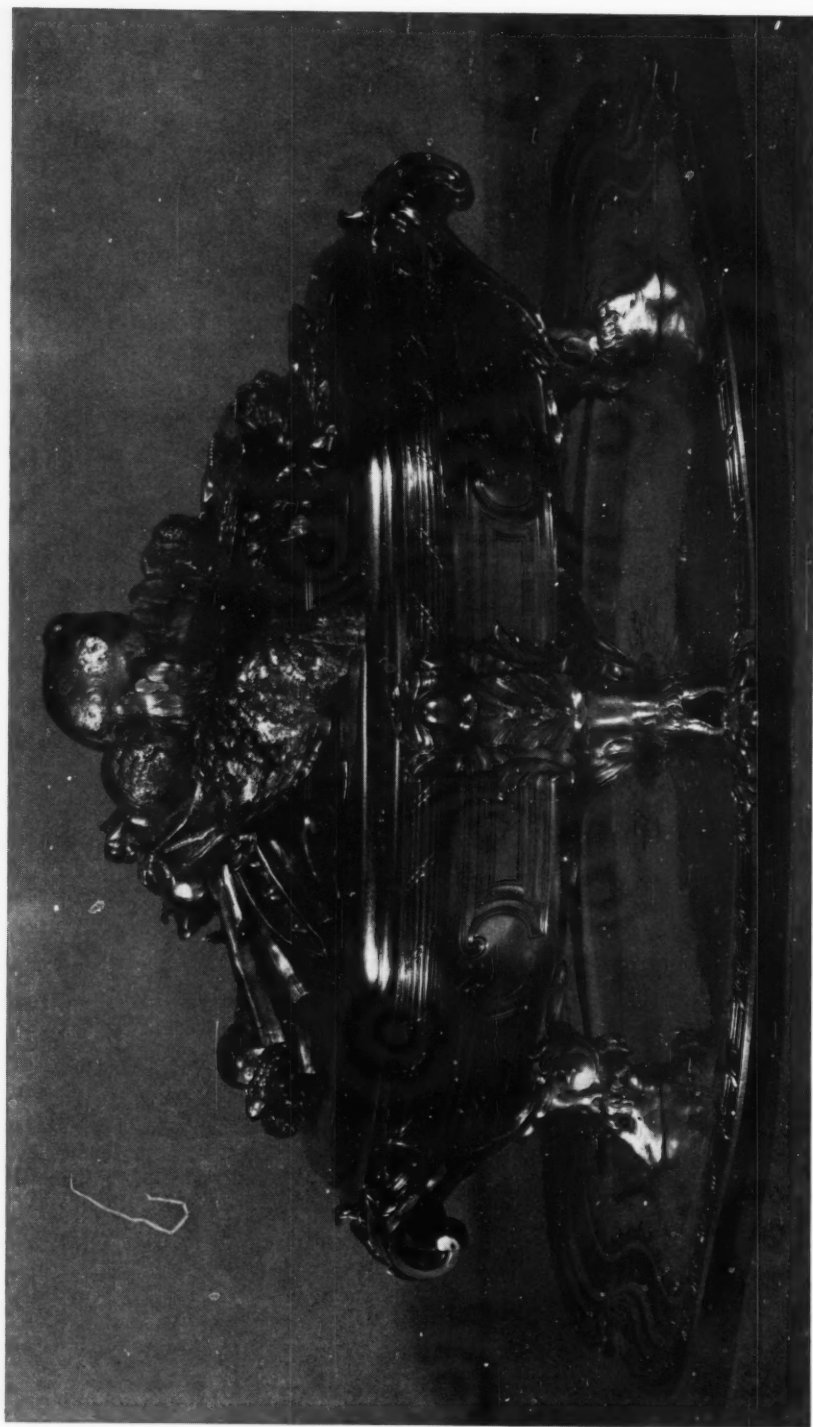
A VILLAGE FESTIVAL
by JOOST CORNELISZ DROOCHSLOOT

The Institute is proud of its collection of Dutch paintings, which includes not only works by the greater artists, but also a large, precious and fascinating group of paintings by many of the *petits maîtres* of the Netherlands, most of whom are not well represented in American collections. Joost Cornelisz Droochsloot belongs to the latter category. His large *Village Scene*, generously presented by Mrs. William E. Scripps to our museum, is a characteristic and cleverly planned composition, full of charming details and, like all paintings of Holland's Golden Age, technically perfect.

Most of the early paintings executed by Droochsloot were of historical or biblical subjects—*The Good Samaritan*, *St. Martin*—not very different in conception from those turned out in large quantities by his colleagues of the Utrecht School. Fortunately, the artist turned later to the depiction of gay village scenes, crowded with the humble folk and burghers of his own day. This *Village Festival* is a typical example of this phase of his art, with its exuberance, its wealth of vivid details and, even in this hackneyed theme of the Dutch kermesse, its freshness and spontaneity. More striking still is Droochsloot's technical economy of means. The ebullience of the subject, the sensual or grotesque overtones so characteristic of Dutch low life are given here some sort of harmony through the golden glow which pervades the whole scene. Perhaps Droochsloot did not have much to say, but he said it quite well.

P. L. G.

Cat. No. 1179. Panel. Height 27½ inches; width 42½ inches. Signed lower left corner with monogram. Former Collections: Louis R. Ehrich, New York; James E. Scripps. Gift of Mrs. William E. Scripps, 1954.



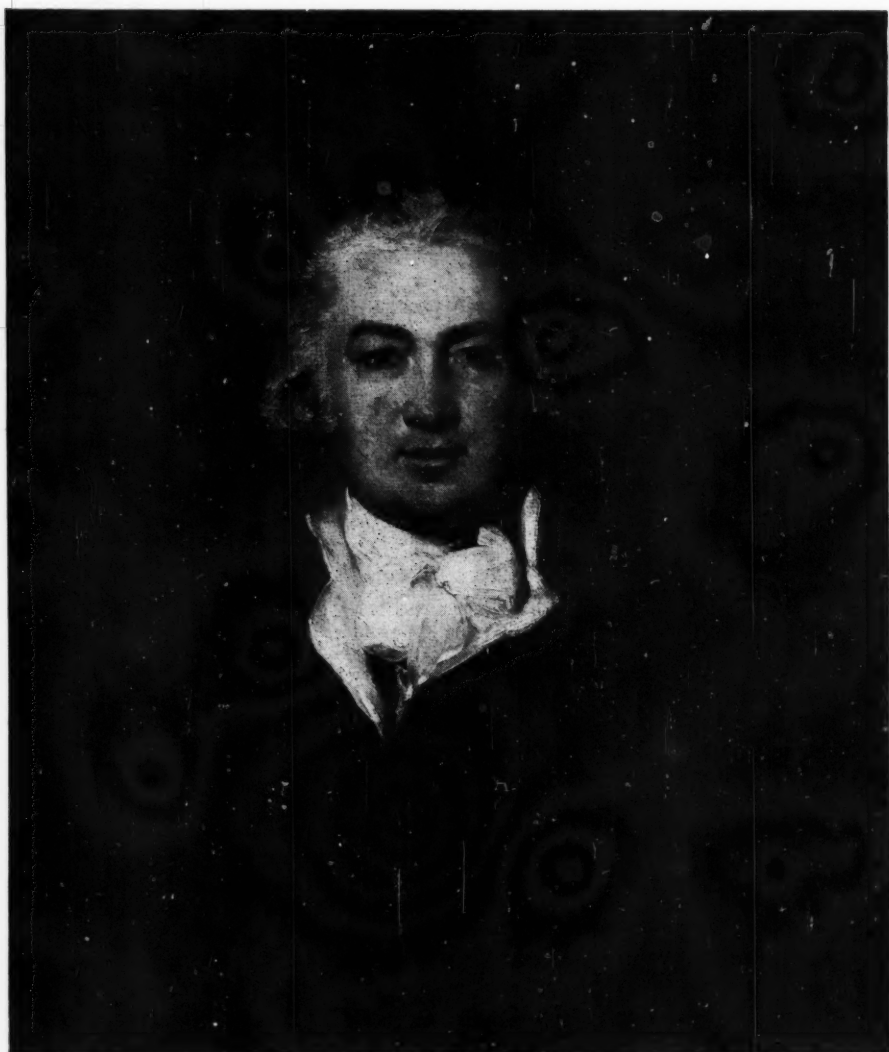
TUREEN, by THOMAS GERMAIN, French (1673-1748)
Acc. No. 55.183. Length (of the tray) 17 inches; total height 8¼ inches
The Elizabeth Parke Firestone Collection of French Silver, 1955

A TUREEN by THOMAS GERMAIN

Two years ago there was presented to the Institute one of the most splendid gifts ever made to our museum — the entire silver toilet service of nineteen pieces executed in Paris for the Portuguese Duke of Cadaval, fifth Marquess of Ferreira and sixth count of Tentúgal (1684-1749). The gift of Mrs. Elizabeth Parke Firestone, the foremost collector of antique French silver in this country, it gave Detroit a prominent place among the few American museums which own such *rarae avis*. To this truly magnificent group Mrs. Firestone recently added another masterpiece of French craftsmanship, the silver tureen illustrated here and on the cover of this Bulletin.

The work of the great French silversmith, Thomas Germain, whose *main divine* Voltaire celebrated in his poems, and one of the very few examples of his genius in this country, it was executed in 1729 and at one time belonged to the Infant Don Philippe, Duke of Parma and son-in-law of King Louis XV. Some seventy years ago, when it was part of the well-known San Donato Collection in Florence and when the maker's name was still unknown, it was called by the expert Mannheim "perhaps the most beautiful example of French silver in existence." It is easy to agree with such a statement. Nobility of shape, perfection of execution, incredibly subtle balance between complexity and restraint, a design carried to its ultimate fantasy, are the most striking characteristics of the Parma tureen. Such a deliberate work of art deserves (and will receive in a forthcoming issue of *The Art Quarterly*) closer study than can be given to it here. For the present it may suffice to add that the tureen, which probably formed part of a set of three, belonged in the late nineteenth century to Baron Jérôme Pichon, a well-known connoisseur of French silver, and that it was exported to Russia, probably about 1892. Nothing apparently was known of its history since that time, when it was sold at auction in Paris in 1953, in a sale of unclaimed goods held by the French government. The almost illegible maker's mark was found by Mr. Jacques Helft on the border of the platter. But more convincing still is the unique craftsmanship of Thomas Germain's "divine hand."

P. L. G.



EWAN LAW, M.P., by SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, English (1769-1830)
Gift of Mrs. William E. Scripps, 1954

A REDISCOVERED PORTRAIT

by SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE

The Institute owns an impressive number of portraits by the best known English painters, from Kneller and Hogarth to Gainsborough and Raeburn. Only one major portrait painter was missing in our collection, Sir Thomas Lawrence, the most prolific and, as Mr. Kenneth Garlick, his latest biographer, has called him, "one of the most exciting of British portrait painters." Thanks to Mrs. William E. Scripps, this gap in the development of one of England's great artistic achievements has been filled, and the sensitive portrait of Ewan Law illustrated opposite will henceforth represent Lawrence at his very best in our museum.

From what may be gathered at the present time, Ewan Law was a little known member of Parliament. Mr. Garlick obligingly informed us that he probably was the second son of Edmund Law, Bishop of Carlisle, that he married in 1784, and that he died in 1829. It is interesting to note that the painting, acquired in the twenties by Mr. William E. Scripps, was lost for a great many years, and was listed as untraced in Mr. Garlick's excellent book as late as 1954. It was last recorded (in the ponderous *Life and Correspondence of Sir Thomas Lawrence*, published shortly after the artist's death) as having been executed for twenty-five guineas sometime between 1788 and 1795. An important addition to Lawrence's *œuvre*, this portrait, muted in color, technically perfect in its contrasts of thick, staccato impasto and delicate, fluid touches, embodies in a subtle manner the qualities—dignity, poise, *joie de vivre*, good breeding—of the English gentleman. To our gallery of squires and their ladies, this is a welcome addition.

P. L. G.

Cat. No. 1177. Canvas. Height 30 inches; width 25 inches. References: D. E. Williams, *The Life and Correspondence of Sir Thomas Lawrence*, Kt., 1831; Kenneth Garlick, *Sir Thomas Lawrence*, 1954, p. 45 and Appendix I. No. 42. There is also mention (in Lord Gower's *Sir Thomas Lawrence* 1900), of a "Mr. Law," "painted before or immediately after Lawrence came to London, for 30 guineas." The costume of the present portrait precludes such an early date. Mr. Garlick informed this writer that in the Archives of the National Portrait Gallery there is a note, evidently concerning this portrait, stating that it came from Ralston Melville, in Cornwall, and that it belonged in 1928 to Mr. S. M. Carper, of New York. *Gift of Mrs. William E. Scripps*, 1954.



THE MUSIC LESSON. FRENCH (VINCENNES-SÈVRES), after 1753
 Gift of The Joseph Boyer Memorial Fund, 1955

Probably the most personal innovation of the Sèvres factory is what the French called *biscuit*, the mat, snow-white material which was used with such success to translate into plastic form the delicate creations of the rococo painters. The present group, a welcome gift of The Joseph Boyer Memorial Fund, was inspired by a painting exhibited by François Boucher at the 1748 Salon. One of the most popular subjects of the century, this *Music Lesson* was copied not only in porcelain, at Vincennes (a splendid glazed example is in the Metropolitan Museum), Mennecey or Chelsea, but also in tapestry at the Beauvais factory.

Acc. No. 55.85. Height 8½ inches. Gift of The Joseph Boyer Memorial Fund, 1955.



SUGAR BOWL by MYER MYERS, American, 1723-1795

Called by one of the foremost experts in American silver "this noble Master Silversmith," Myer Myers (1723-1795) is one of the best known American craftsmen of his time. The sugar bowl shown here, so graceful in design, was exhibited recently at the comprehensive exhibition of Myer Myers' work organized at the Brooklyn Museum and is listed in Mrs. Jeanette W. Rosenbaum's volume on the artist. It comes to the Institute as the gift of members of the Jewish Community in Detroit in commemoration of the American Jewish Tercentenary, 1654-1954.

Acc. No. 55.214. Total height 4 15/16 inches; diameter of bowl 4 1/2 inches. Former Collections: Willoughby Farr, Edgewater, N. J.; Morris Cohon, Englewood, N. J.

This sugar bowl is the gift of the following:

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Berry
 Mr. and Mrs. Louis Berry
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Brody
 Mr. and Mrs. Harold King Brown
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Feinberg
 Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Fleischman
 Mr. Charles L. Levin

Mr. Philip Nusholtz
 Mr. and Mrs. Louis G. Redstone
 Mr. and Mrs. Saul H. Rose
 Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert B. Silverman
 Mrs. Nathan Simons
 Mr. and Mrs. Edward Tann
 Mr. and Mrs. Stanley White



THREE SISTERS by LOUIS-ANDRÉ-GABRIEL BOUCHET, French, 1759-1842
Gift of Leo M. Butzel, in memory of his wife, 1955

THREE SISTERS

by LOUIS-ANDRÉ-GABRIEL BOUCHET

A pupil of David, Bouchet painted the same subjects as his teacher — neo-classical, historical scenes and realistic portraits. The painting recently presented to the Institute by Mr. Leo M. Butzel originally was part of a larger composition, of which the Family Group shown below (in our museum since 1927) formed the central section. Still another head, cut from the opposite corner, remains in a private collection in Canada.

Cat. No. 1181. Canvas. Height $44\frac{3}{4}$ inches; width $28\frac{3}{8}$ inches. *Gift of Leo M. Butzel in memory of his wife, 1955.*



FAMILY GROUP, by LOUIS-ANDRÉ-GABRIEL BOUCHET
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, 1927



BOOKSHOP: HEBREW BOOKS, HOLY DAY BOOKS by BEN SHAHN, American Contemporary
Cat. No. 1183. Height 27 inches; width 20 inches
Gift of John S. Newberry, Jr., 1955

At a time when we are keyed to the values of abstract painting—or to the abstract values of painting—the work of Ben Shahn has special impact. There are few painters today who have more successfully realized the pure beauty of paint surfaces, the eloquence of line, the decorative splendor of brilliant color and detail, but Ben Shahn has consistently combined these elements with a real feeling for subjects, for man and society. In recent years, his work has contained less violent and caustic passages of social commentary than formerly, but there is always a “story value.” What is the relationship between the woman and the “Basement to Let” sign? As in any important work, Shahn’s may be interpreted on several levels, and questions that occur on any one of them seem no less important than the others.

Shahn works in tempera. The fields of bright, clear color and the pointed use of line make his panels surpassingly handsome to anyone who reacts to the beauty of painting and a complete delight to painters.

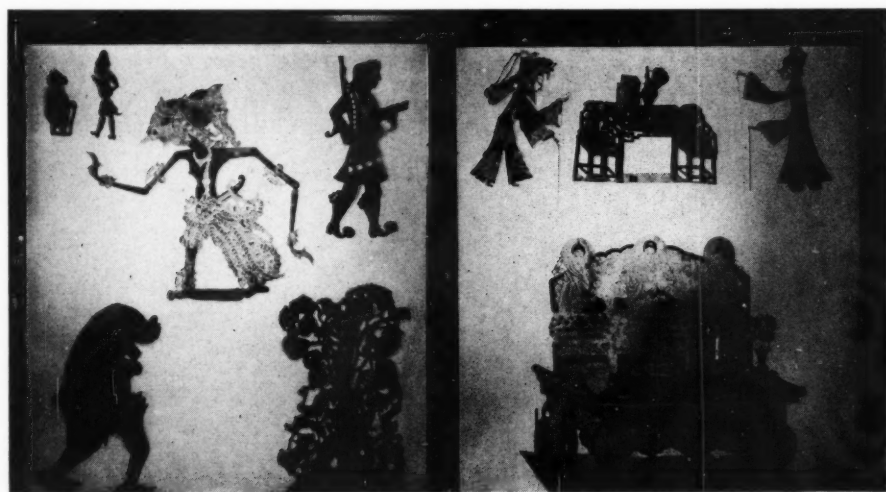
A. F. P.

ORIENTAL SHADOW PUPETS

With the exception of the two Turkish figures shown above, which were the gift of Miss Barbara Amundson, these shadow puppets came to the museum as part of the Paul McPharlin Memorial Collection. They are constructed of various kinds of dried and dyed animal skin: camel hide for the Turkish figures, cowhide for the Javanese king, buffalo skin for the Balinese figures and donkey skin for the Chinese shadows. The Greek figure is a modern adaptation of a traditional parchment figure and is made of fibreboard. Only the Chinese and Turkish figures transmit brightly colored light; the other shadows are monochromatic.

The Chinese figures, probably originating in Lanchow, belong to a larger group representing the complete casts and settings for three plays given as a trilogy: *Visiting Li Er Ssu*, *The Fox Bewitchment* and *The Exorcism*. The puppets were purchased on Paul McPharlin's commission by Benjamin March at Peking in 1931. March's excellent account of the conditions of purchase and the scenarios for the three plays were published posthumously (*Chinese Shadow-figure Plays and their Making*, Detroit, Puppetry Imprints, 1938).

A. S. CAVALLO



ORIENTAL SHADOW PUPPETS. Left panel, left to right, upper to lower register: Beberuhi and Zeybek, Turkish, 19th century. Acc. Nos. 54.329-30; King, Javanese, 19th century, 52.589; Greek Soldier, Greco-American (Harry Tsouleas), ca. 1935, 52.588; Demon and Tree, Balinese, 19th century, 52.596, 52.595. Right panel: White Fox as Sung Chien-Ching, 52.531, Writing Table 52.558, Kung-Tzu, 52.525; Altar of the Trinity, 52.775, all Chinese, early 20th century.

CROUCHING NUDE
by HENRI MATISSE, French
(1869-1954)

Bronze. Height 9¼ inches
Acc. No. 55.223
Gift of
The Friends of Modern Art, 1955



SPHEROID III
by HERBERT FERBER
American Contemporary
Copper. Height 32¼ inches
Acc. No. 55.222
Gift of
The Friends of Modern Art, 1955

